

# Paddling to 300

## Canoeist reaches milestone on East Twin River

BY KEVIN BRALEY

Herald Times Reporter

**TWO RIVERS** — Rick Kark never planned to paddle his canoe on 300 different Wisconsin rivers or streams, but on Saturday, the East Twin River became his latest milestone.

About 50 other canoe and kayak enthusiasts in 30 boats joined Kark on his 300th trip, which took them on a three-hour tour from the Mishicot Dam to Paddlers Park in Two Rivers.

Kark, from Madison, began canoeing as a teenager in high school — paddling the Cedar River in northern Iowa.

What started as a hobby with friends became a passion.

"I love both rivers and canoeing — it's a double love," Kark, a retired physician, said. "I love canoeing rivers and seeing what's around the bend."

Out of curiosity in the early 1980s, Kark began counting the number of different Wisconsin rivers

and streams he had paddled. He counted nearly 100 at that time.

"I had no goal then," he said. "In fact, I never even thought of 200. Then I got to 200, and I wasn't even thinking of 300. As 300 got closer, I thought it might be fun to reach that milestone."

Kark paddled Paint Creek near Chippewa Falls for his 200th in 1997.

Kark chose the East Twin because he was in the area — attending his niece's voice recital at Lawrence University in Appleton on Thursday.

There were several rivers here that he hadn't paddled. He paddled the south branch of the Manitowoc River earlier this week and the Branch River on Friday to meet the goal of 300 Saturday.

He eyed the Twin Rivers for the milestone, and knew he had canoeed one of them in the 1970s. He wasn't sure if it was the East Twin or West Twin.

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Wisconsin canoeist Rick Kark, of Madison, cheers on the start of his 300th Wisconsin stream or river canoe trip Saturday at the East Twin River in Mishicot. Kark started his trip with nearly 30 other canoes and kayaks at the Mishicot dam and ended it at Paddler's Park in Two Rivers. See more photos of the trip online at [www.htrnews.com](http://www.htrnews.com), click on Photo Galleries



Rick Kark, right, paddles the East Twin River to mark Kark's 300th different Wisconsin stream or river.

## CANOEIST

From A1

Kark called the Two Rivers Parks and Recreation Department for help, and was given Phil Rohrer's phone number. Rohrer, of Two Rivers, is a kayak enthusiast involved with the Lakeshore Sea Kayakers group.

Through conversations with Rohrer, Kark was able to learn

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Rick Kark, right, paddles the East Twin Rivers in Mishicot on Saturday. The East Twin River marked Kark's 300th different Wisconsin river or stream he has canoed.

## CANOEIST

From A1

Kark called the Two Rivers Parks and Recreation Department for help, and was given Phil Rohrer's phone number. Rohrer, of Two Rivers, is a kayak enthusiast involved with the Lakeshore Sea Kayakers group.

Through conversations with Rohrer, Kark was able to learn he had canoed the West Twin, and Rohrer had learned something needed to be done to celebrate Kark's 300th trip.

"I think it's fantastic for the area that (Kark) picked the East Twin for his 300th," Rohrer said. "We're awful lucky to have someone with his caliber of experience canoeing with us."

Rohrer helped arrange lodging for Kark and solicited kayakers and canoeists to paddle alongside of Kark.

"It was a good day. It was a nice day," Kark said. "The number doesn't mean much, but I enjoy this."

Paddlers from LaCrosse, Sheboygan, Madison, Iola and Illinois joined Kark.

"It was very nice," Larry Bitters, Green Bay, said. "Farther up the river where we were protected from the wind it was beautiful."

Bitters, 56, has been kayaking for about 10 years. This was his third trip on the water this year.

"With the bad weather we got this week, it was nice to get out," Bitters said.

Kark said he will continue paddling because of the challenge canoeing presents.

"It's adventuresome, it's in-

teresting," Kark said. "I love the natural world and the beauty of rivers. I love the physical challenge, which involves me getting back to my car."

Kark said about two-thirds of his canoe trips were done alone. He doesn't believe he'll reach 400 Wisconsin rivers and streams.

"It would be impossible. The only rivers left are those that are so small they are choked with fallen trees," Kark said. "I've done virtually every navigable river in Wisconsin."

Kark said there are more than 1,000 rivers, streams and creeks in Wisconsin.

Kark has also canoed in the West and in the Appalachian Mountains. This summer, Kark will spend six weeks canoeing in northern Canada.

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